

Interview with former [REDACTED] hand, at Madison, May 22, 1990

SNIE's of May and August 1984, essentially reached conclusion that the war scare of 1983-4 was part of a Soviet propaganda campaign designed to intimidate the US, deter it from deploying improved weapons, arouse opposition in US and Western Europe to US foreign policy objectives. If this so, not of crucial significance.

Another potential conclusion partially adopted is that the war scare also reflected an internal Sov power struggle between conservatives and pragmatists or an effort to avert blame for economic failures by pointing to military threats. If so, events could not be ignored but would not imply a fundamental shift in strategy.

Third conclusion, not adopted at the time but closer to the retrospective view of PFIAB, that war scare was an expression of a genuine belief on the part of Soviet leaders that US was planning a nuclear first strike, causing Sov military to prepare for this eventuality, for example by readying forces for a Sov preemptive strike. If so, war scare a cause for concern.

In SNIE's, intell comty believed Sov actions were not inspired by and Sov leaders did not perceive a genuine danger of imminent conflict with US. Sov statements to the contrary were judged to be propaganda.

But PFIAB said 2/90 that Sovs perceived "correlation of forces" turned toward USA, and were convinced that US was seeking military superiority, and thus chances were growing for US preparedness to mount a preemptive 1st strike vs USSR.

Gordievsky info was very closely held at the time but there was some consciousness at top of the general upshot of it.

US intel knew that Sovs had mounted a huge collection effort to find out what Amers were actually doing. They were taking actions to be able to sustain a surprise attack, especially increased protection for their leadership in view of reduced warning time of P2s etc. Improved bunkers, special communications etc.

Gordievsky said they had set up a large computer model in the Min of Defense to calculate and monitor the correlation of forces, including mil, econ, psychological factors, to assign numbers and relative weights.

At time US saw:

Evidence of Sov collection effort.

Placing of Soviet aircraft in Germany and Poland on a higher alert status, readying nuclear strike forces, in period of 2-11 Nov. 83.

In 1984, (JUNE) failue to send the trucks as usual from military to help with the harvest. 85 send them but not from forward areas.

An ominous list of indicators in early 1984. Some from warning people in Pentagon. David McManis, one of thse in charge. Also psb see Gen. Peroots, was DIA director; John McMahon, was DDI and later deputy director CIA.